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EDITORIAL COMMENT



A TEMPORARY CHANGE IN THE EDITORIAL OFFICE

Most unexpectedly, the Editor-in-Chief was bidden by the JOURNAL Directors to attend the International Congress of Nurses to convene in London July 20.

The associate editor was taking a much-needed vacation, so the business manager was hurriedly transferred from the Philadelphia office, to the editorial headquarters to assume the JOURNAL and family responsibilities during the absence of the Chief. This was made possible by the close and cordial affiliation of the two departments which has been so great a factor in the JOURNAL's success. As there was much of the detail of the editorial office about which she could not be instructed, for such omissions or errors as may occur the business manager craves the indulgence of our ever-considerate readers.

ASSOCIATED ALUMNÆ LESSONS

HAVING had the privilege and great good fortune to attend the late convention of nurses in Minneapolis, unattached, so to speak, with nothing particular to attend to, nothing to distract, just to listen and note the trend of things as the business was transacted or the papers read and discussed, it soon became very apparent that several points in nursing education stood prominently out, or were the dominant notes that pervaded the atmosphere of the assembly and were constantly being struck by the advanced minds, the leaders, and the teaching body.

SPECIAL TRAINING AND THE TIME TO BE DEVOTED TO IT

The necessity for special training in the care of obstetric cases, throat and nose, eye and ear, nervous and insane, tuberculosis, children's diseases, visiting, school, social service, etc., each had its vigorous advocate and defender, as the speaker happened to be conversant with, or engaged in,

the branch of the work under discussion, and when the time to be devoted to the specialty was discussed there seemed to be some danger that the hitherto fancied groundless criticism and vague impression that the sum of the present-day general training only fitted the nurse for hospital routine work, or perhaps the care of a fever or a fracture, might be found to be resting on a solid basis of fact.

Naturally the questions arise, What is the *matter* with the "general training"? Is theory getting too much consideration and breadth being developed at the expense of depth? Are the fundamentals not receiving due attention and the underlying principles of their application no longer adequately imparted, as a foundation on which to build the superstructure of specialization in any branch? Are the completeness of hospital equipment and the precision of training-school management reducing routine to such a fine art that it is including the nurse as a part of the mechanism? certainly increasing her ability to accomplish more and a better quality of skilled work, but limiting her mental capacity along lines which make for initiative in applicability, resourcefulness, and adaptability under every condition. Is it because the rapid advance in medical knowledge calls for greater specialization in that profession, making the dependence for more assistance from the nurse a demand for specialization in hers?

There are several influences at work to which we may well pay some heed in this connection. The schools of philanthropy which must have pupils who find the lure of new fields of usefulness for the trained nurse most effective, the special institutions that must get their work done, and private hospitals are specious advocates of long-term specialization.

When out of pioneer conditions a group of women were developed that met every demand made upon them by the public and the medical profession, we must repeat, why is it necessary to specialize in every separate branch of nursing work if the fundamentals are properly instilled and practically applied?

TRAINING-SCHOOL DISCIPLINE

Discipline in hospitals and training schools left a deep impression on our minds because of the points of view of the graduates who never held responsible positions in institutions and the teaching body. The growing idea that the college method of self-government is applicable to hospital and training-school administration seems attractive to the graduate. Without doubt there are errors in judgment and solitary instances of abuse of power in strict discipline, but the graduate body must not lose

sight of the fact that the teaching body has struggled for more than thirty-five years to improve conditions, and has found from experience that the same license cannot be given to an undeveloped, undisciplined body, which is being trained to deal with such important issues as life and death, as to a body simply acquiring knowledge in the abstract.

The two groups must continue to stand together for improvement in conditions not hitherto under the control of the teaching body, for a more just and equitable treatment of the student body.

THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE ASSOCIATED ALUMNÆ

THE official proceedings of the Associated Alumnae meeting at Minneapolis will, it is hoped, be given space in the September JOURNAL. There was not sufficient time for the Publication Committee to arrange the papers and reports for the August number, as a fuller report than last year is to be given.

In anticipation of the secretary's announcement, we are giving the personnel of the Executive Committee as appointed, as is customary by the Directors, the morning following the adjournment. This is comprised of Miss Delano, president, New York; Miss Deans, secretary, Michigan; Miss Davids, treasurer, West Virginia; Miss Cooke, California; Mrs. Tice, Illinois; Miss McIsaac, Michigan; and Mrs. Hunter Robb, Ohio,—geographically the most representative committee we have ever had. It is now expected that the fall meeting of the committee will be held either in Cleveland or Detroit.

THE RETIREMENT OF MISS LINDA RICHARDS.

THE retirement from active nursing work of the first woman to enter a training school for nurses in the United States is an event of more than passing interest. Miss Richards's resignation from the superintendency of the school for nurses in connection with the hospital for the insane at Kalamazoo, Mich., was announced in our pages last month. Unconsciously to herself, perhaps, in those early days Miss Richards, more than any other one woman, gave the impetus to what is now known as higher education for nurses. Her first fight was for better living conditions, better food, and systematic instruction for the pupils under her care. She had traditions of centuries to overcome and the personal opposition of physicians and influential men and women to combat. She has left her imprint upon more hospitals and training schools than any other woman of her profession, as a result of which progress has been always upward—a great record of work for the betterment of society to carry with her to the end of her life.

We wish Miss Richards many years of peace and happiness in the home which she will make with her sister in Providence, Rhode Island.

A FALL CONFERENCE

A CONFERENCE on the prevention of infant mortality will be held under the auspices of the American Academy of Medicine, in New Haven, Conn., November 11 and 12.

The census reports for the registration cities show that the deaths under two years constitute nearly one-fourth of the total mortality of all ages. Stronger evidence could not be required of the need for the intelligent co-operation of physicians and laymen.

ANOTHER OPENING FOR NURSES

FOUR or five "female medical teachers" are needed for service in southern Alaska. They would be under the employ of the Alaska Division of the National Bureau of Education, and their duties would be to give instruction in matters pertaining to health, both in the school room and the homes. Salaries would range from \$60 to \$80 per month with quarters in the school building. For further particulars, address at once Dr. Samuel M. Zwemer, 125 East 27th Street, New York City.